United Nations S/2008/287

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 May 2008

Original: English

Letter dated 30 April 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Allow me to express my Government's views on the statement by the President of the Security Council that was issued today, 30 April 2008, on the situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. In previous resolutions and statements, the Security Council supported the work of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, established by the parties, pursuant to article 4.2 of the Algiers Agreement. In the latest statement, the Security Council not only neglected to endorse the final delimitation and demarcation decision of 27 November 2006 of the Boundary Commission, which put to rest the border dispute between the two countries, but also failed to demand the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from sovereign Eritrean territories.

There are no legal or political issues at the heart of the dispute between the two parties on the border matter because the mechanism jointly established by Eritrea and Ethiopia has concluded its work. Article 4.15 of the Algiers Agreement clearly states that "each party shall respect the border so determined, as well as territorial integrity and sovereignty of the other party". There is no "stalemate" or impasse to overcome except Ethiopia's legal obligation to withdraw its troops from territories awarded to Eritrea by the final delimitation and demarcation decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission. The role of the United Nations as guarantor of the Algiers Agreement is to ensure respect for the rule of law. Ethiopia's occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations that should not be ignored and is not a matter to be left to the parties alone. The responsibility to ensure maintenance of international peace and security is the mandate of the Security Council.

Despite all the exaggerated accusations and misplaced blames Eritrea continued to suffer from, it must be understood that Eritrea maintained good cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). It is important to point out that "the future of UNMEE" is a matter directly linked to Security Council resolution 1320 (2000) that set out the conditions under which the peacekeeping mission would come to an end. The United Nations troops have been deployed in their mission area for nearly eight years, far beyond the two years initially envisioned to last until the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia was demarcated. The Security Council, in paragraph 13 of its resolution, emphasized that the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities links the termination of the United Nations peacekeeping mission with the completion of the process of delimitation

and demarcation of the Ethiopian-Eritrean border. As the Boundary Commission completed its work of demarcation on 30 November 2007, the specific condition stated in Security Council resolution 1320 (2000) has been met, necessitating the Council to officially terminate the mandate of UNMEE.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Araya **Desta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative